

IN MEMORIAM

Harold G. Wolff, M.D.

Dr. Harold G. Wolff, physician, scientist, teacher, and student of the nature of man, died on Feb. 21, 1962, in the full flower of his productive life. Dr. Wolff was a native New Yorker, educated at City College and later at Harvard, where he received his M.D. in 1923. After house-staff training in medicine at New York's Roosevelt Hospital and in neurology at the Cornell Clinic, he returned to Boston, where he worked for 2 years in the laboratories and clinics of Drs. Harry Forbes and Stanley Cobb. Thereafter he spent 2 years at the Phipps Clinic at Johns Hopkins under Adolph Meyer, part of a year with Ivan Pavlov in Russia, and a year at Graz in Austria, where he studied with Otto Loewi.

When in 1932 Cornell opened its new medical center at New York Hospital, Dr. Wolff joined the faculty as Chief of the Neurology Division under Dr. Eugene Dubois in the Department of Medicine. Later he succeeded Dr. Foster Kennedy as Professor of Neurology and Director of the Neurological Division at Bellevue, while retaining his post at Cornell and the New York Hospital. In 1958 The Anne Parrish Titzel Professorship of Medicine was created for him at Cornell through the bequest of one of his patients.

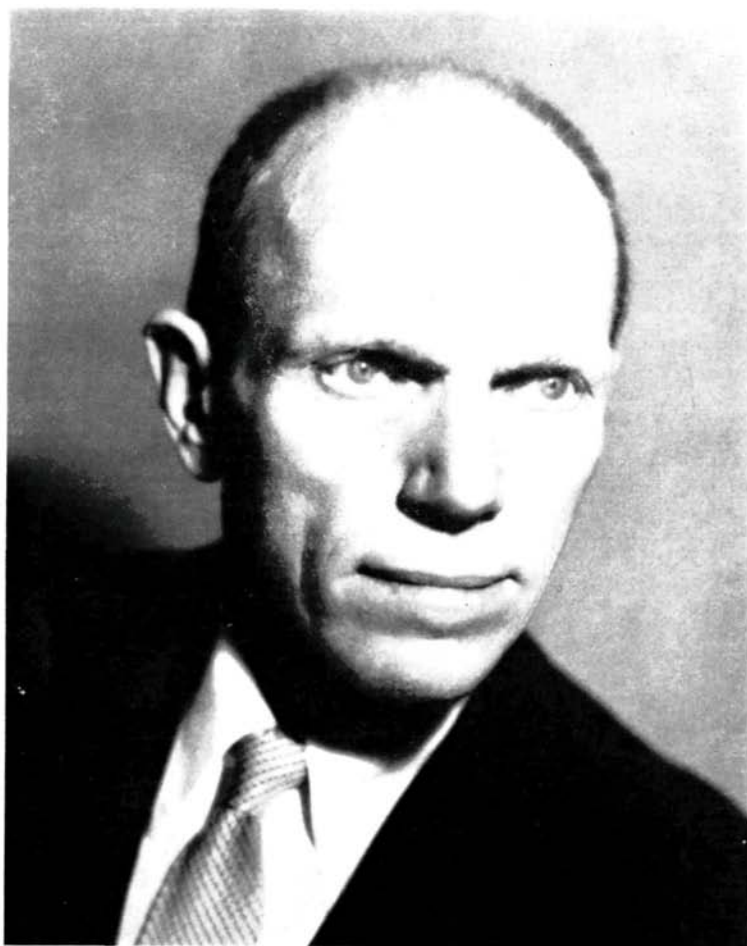
A recital of the many honors conferred on Dr. Wolff during his lifetime would not provide very much of a picture of the man, and furthermore would not do

justice to his accomplishments. His impact on the development of medical thought cannot yet be fully appreciated.

Dr. Wolff's influence on those who worked with him was enormous. He radiated an attitude of inquiry, rigorous self-discipline, and respect for evidence. As a chief he could always be counted upon to display a lively interest in the problems and ideas of his subordinates, giving freely of his time to help them think through their questions in a creative and resourceful manner. There was always a stimulus to do more and to do it better, and to ask the lingering question, "What is the biological significance?"

He had little time for casual amenities, but a boundless capacity for kindness and understanding.

His early work with Forbes was on the anatomy and physiology of the cerebral circulation. From that time on his efforts were directed toward elucidating the relationship of the nervous system to the mechanisms of disease. Throughout his studies Dr. Wolff recognized the brain as mediator between task and organism in its continuous efforts to adapt to change. His experimental subjects were human beings: the sick, the well, his colleagues, and himself. His work was distinguished by his ability always to ask significant questions of nature. His interests were extensive, but never superficial. He investigated one phenomenon after another



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in a fresh and imaginative way, and always systematically. Relentlessly pursuing the inquiry step by step, he overcame obstacles by extremely ingenious methods of study.

Dr. Wolff's first major contribution was the thoroughgoing elucidation of the mechanism of migraine and other headaches of vascular origin. In the course of these studies he established the pertinence of temperament and goals to the phenomenon of headache. These discoveries led him to a deeper interest in pain and in people. Ultimately his studies on pain reconciled age-old points of view by demonstrating, on the one hand, that pain was a unique and relatively precise sensory perception, and, on the other, that the anguish of pain depended upon aspects of the individual's adjustment that were broader than the sensory experience itself.

As his awareness of the connection between human problems and health and disease grew, Dr. Wolff applied himself with extraordinary virtuosity to the study

of peptic ulcer, ulcerative colitis, hypertension, and a host of other bodily disturbances. From such careful studies with a score of fortunate collaborators, he provided the warp and woof of a theoretical fabric the design of which expressed the relationship of the human organism, and of its goal-directed behavior, to health and disease. His contributions, both concrete and abstract, were marked by a clear continuity over the years. His interest in the chemical mediation of neural impulses, aroused during his early days with Professor Otto Loewi, culminated in his recent discovery of a new neurohumor, neurokinin, which has been shown to be elaborated locally in response to noxious stimulation of the skin, to electrical stimuli applied to a nerve trunk, and also to symbolic stimuli in the form of meaningful events in a man's daily life.

Harold G. Wolff was a biologist in the highest sense, an inquirer, experimenter, and philosopher.

STEWART WOLF, M.D.